

THE COUNSELS OF BUCKSHOT.

(With acknowledgments to "S." in "The Westminster Gazette.")

HAVING occasion to investigate the affairs of my friend BUCKSHOT, recently deceased, I was astounded at the voluminous notes upon men and matters which he had made. Nothing seems to have escaped his comment—he jotted down impressions of marmalade, motor-buses, A. B. C. girls, spiritualism, most impartially. I confess I do not grasp fully the meaning of some of the remarks, but I place a few of them ungrudgingly before an unsuspecting public in the confidence that, not knowing my address, it will be unable to make me a substantial token of its gratification.

Turning first to a little volume of 870 pages ticketed "Spring," I select a sentence or two instancing BUCKSHOT's wide observation:—

"Nature is renewed" (he says) "in Spring . . . The time of snow is past; birds sing, trees put forth fresh leaves. . . How strange it is that the immanence of Spring should be so inherent!"

I pass over Summer and Autumn, on which his meditations are no less inspiring, and come to this flawless gem under the heading "Margarine":—

"To contemplate a pound of Margarine in the right spirit is to the wise man very helpful in seasons of mental distress. He appreciates the gulf between the false and the true, the real and the unreal, the sporadic and the epidemic. . . And if the contemplation of a pound of Margarine can so uplift the soul, how much better were it to consider two pounds."

After Margarine there is a dissertation on Mumps:—

"A child with the mumps is a pathetic object, but a man with the mumps is a butterfly, so to put it, broken upon the wheel. Yet his companions are merry when they note his warped smile, his lop-sided cachinnation. From this alone the indigenous infamy of human nature may be inferred . . . Tell me what a man laughs at and I will tell you his character . . . To have a friend with the mumps is one of those Providential occurrences for our restraint and guidance; if you laugh at him I say you are a homogeneous monster, unfit to have a friend. Alas, for ingrained ineptitude!"

Twenty-five paragraphs relate to Umbrellas. I reproduce one:—

"The office-boy carries no umbrella; indeed, he would be the butt of his compeers did he possess one. But elevate him to the status of a clerk, and the umbrella, rolled on fine days, opened in wet weather, becomes part of his equipment. Strange proof, this, of the in-



THE INGENIOUS PAINTER, FINDING HIS PICTURE SKIED, WITH ON A PLAN FOR DRAWING ATTENTION TO ITS MERITS.

eradicable incomprehensibility of man, who, as soon as he hath, wanteth more. How sad this is!"

BUCKSHOT then digresses to Weather, and I find this:—

"Moonshine is the dessert of the day, the *compote de fruits* of the menu provided by the gods . . . If it were not for this, 'twould be a sorry world. Let us each, then, in his own way strive to lighten a brother's labours with a modicum of moonshine."

I could go on quoting for hours, or years, but must stop. I cannot refrain,

however, from giving a snippet from my poor friend's notes upon London:—

"London is the maw of the universe, into which is thrown everything of the best, literary, religious, scientific, as children fling buns at the Zoo—or rather at the elephant in the Zoo. . . And if her maw is so horrific, what is her paw? Under her paw she stamps out the life of all who do not throw their buns from a respectful distance. . . Maw and Paw—here we have the gist of the whole matter."

Good, genial BUCKSHOT! How we shall miss him!

ANOTHER POET OF THE CHANNEL.

"Sir," began the Orator, "the Liberal Government has been the salvation of England (*loud Liberal cheers*). And Rome was saved by *her geese*" (*loud Tory laughter*).

The memory of this pleasant surprise, produced at the Cambridge Union in the early eighties, comes back to me as I turn over the pages of a modest little brochure entitled *Our Island England. Twenty Sonnets giving reasons why we should not make the Channel Tunnel*, by FREDERICK W. P. SWINBORNE. Great national crises have before now called forth a poet to give utterance to the people's inarticulate passion. And of such is Mr. SWINBORNE. He does not sing, like the linnet, for singing's sake, because he must; he sings with a purpose. He is not content to say, "Let me make the nation's sonnets, and I care not who constructs their Channel Tunnels." He undertakes the one with the express object of preventing anybody from undertaking the other.

The motto of his book, *Equo ne credite, Teucri*, is illustrated by the opening sonnet—"Mistrust the Tunnel!"—where he compares our projected tube with the Wooden Horse which brought about the undoing of Troy. The comparison is perhaps open to the reflection that the Trojans had no share in the construction of the fatal monster; otherwise the similarity of conditions is astonishing, and notably in the matter of the hostile fleet lurking in each case just round the corner and ready to supplement the assaults of craft. This fine thought is developed in the second sonnet—"Antwerp!—and the Channel Tunnel," which begins with an arresting note of danger:

This tunnel make not—Antwerp is too near.

The theme of our traditional frontier is next introduced in an inspired passage where the blinding force of emotion obliterates all distinction between sea and coast. Thus:

In NELSON's day we held the opposing coast
Was England's frontier—now it seems that we
May guard a frontier that is not the sea.

"What would WELLINGTON and NELSON say?" That is the question which gives its title to another sonnet. It is, of course, for our sakes, not theirs, that this speculation is advanced. They have their own record which will remain unaffected by any tunnel. As the poet very rightly puts it:

On their behalf 'tis needless to protest.

Among other things not closely contemplated by these late masters of strategy was the possibility of invasion by airship. Modern experts have stated that the development of aerial transit will render us an easy prey to the raider, tunnel or no tunnel. Not so Mr. SWINBORNE, who lightly challenges the foe to "take London by the sky," if he can:

Let him try!
It would be futile o'er the straits to fly,
Unless a way beneath can serve him well
To bring up heavier guns.

Later, under the imperative title "Tunnel not our England!" he strikes fearlessly at the poisonous root of all the mischief—namely, the dread of sea-sickness. Splendidly oblivious of the almost certain fact that the tunnel is designed to go under, rather than over, the Channel, he adjures the nation to

keep the seas still open to the skies,
Ev'n if the waves us oftentimes incommode.

Then, again, there are the KAISER's subjects in our midst—German waiters, German players on the trombone, and so forth—all ready, at a hint from their War-lord, to seize and occupy our end of the tunnel. It is not their fault: they mean well; but it will be theirs to obey without reasoning why. Let me give the position in the poet's own convincing language:

There are of Germans at the present day
In London tens of thousands, and no doubt
In England thousands we know naught about,
And more may come—good fellows in a way,
But they are soldiers, and, for all they say,
Their KAISER's orders they must carry out.

Within our realms a force they constitute,
That might the tunnel seize should it be made.

The italics represent our own solitary consolation in the thought of the frightful scenes of rapine which would ensue:

The country's sack could feast his lean recruit.

The heading of Sonnet XVI.—"Tunnel First—Conscription After!"—raises another vital question. Both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition will be relieved to learn that the full weight of the poet is on their side. The most effective answer yet made to the arguments in favour of universal service is here to be found in a passage which ignores their existence:

Why do they want conscription? No one yet
Has really told us why.

But I have my suspicion that the poet is not at his logical best on this point; for a little later, in a dashing diatribe against intervention in continental quarrels—

What gain to us have Cressy, Poitiers, been,
Or Agincourt?—

he admits the humiliating truth that we have before now been the victims of numerical superiority; in fact,

We cannot count on conquering one to ten!

The close family likeness between conscription and the income-tax is one that must have been recognised by many profound thinkers when the opponents of the former have contended that a free people could never be dragged into toleration of it. This resemblance has not escaped our poet. On a coloured slip, inserted in his little volume, he prints a few afterthoughts which prove that his abhorrence of conscription is united to a still fiercer detestation of the tyranny of the Exchequer. One sonnet, in which he advocates a bonfire for certain clauses of the Budget, opens with the unforgettable line:

It is a fraud, this hateful income-tax.

The inquisitorial methods of the Inland Revenue Department, ever suspicious of the declarations of honest men, draw from him an indignant protest:

How dare the assessors with curt judgment say,
It is not true! Can they determine truth?
Practise they it, and all it means forsooth?
I trow not!

Well may the "good just man" revolt from their "pestering forms uncouth":

Theirs is no heaven-born right
To assess him with abrupt authority!
He gave them place, they have unrighteous might
Since then usurped,—but we may live to see
Them all thrust out as hateful in his sight.

Myself, I do not share this sanguine outlook; indeed I regard this inset-slip as an error of judgment, and but for its exquisite diction I should be tempted to tear it up. On the other hand, I very cheerfully recognise that with the advent of the main sonnet-sequence a great access of power has come to the camp of the anti-tunnelers. Its topic may, for the moment, be off the *tapis*; but it is certain to recrudescence; and against that day I shall carry these poems (in paper covers) next my chest, and so get fortitude to defy the promoters of my country's ruin. O. S.

A Motto for Lord Portsmouth.

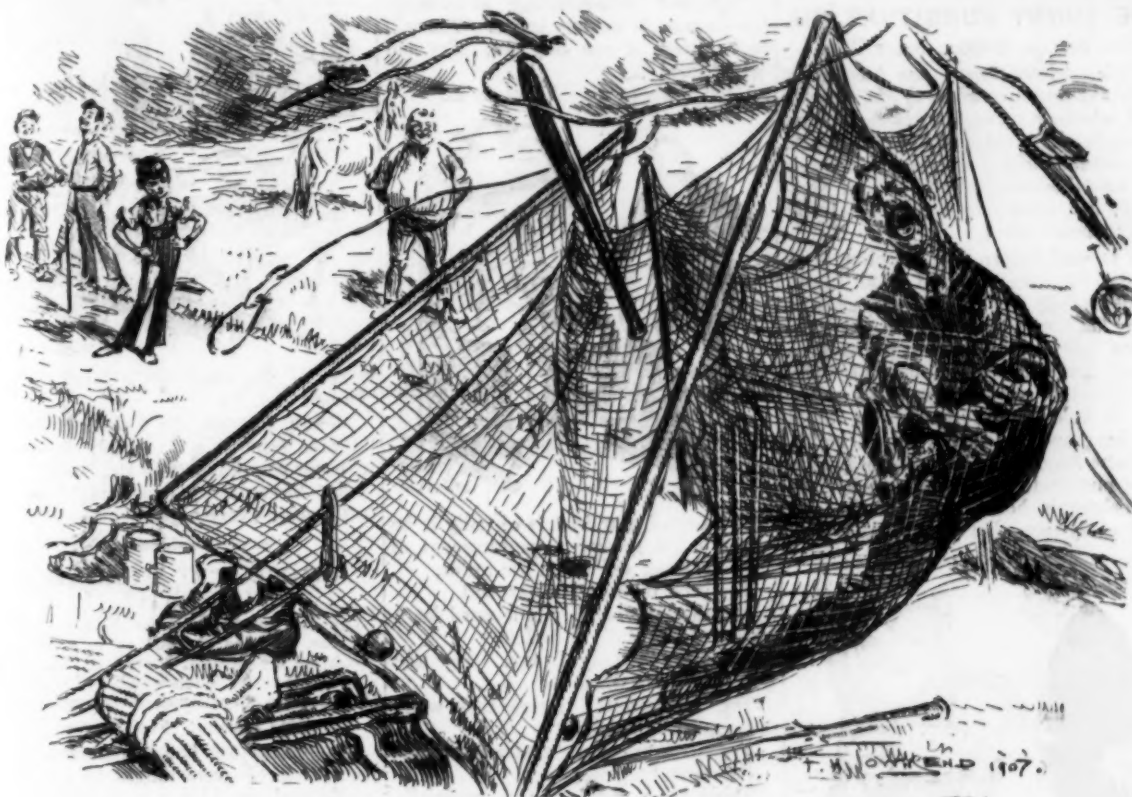
"If I had a tenant, and he wouldn't go,
Do you think I'd WALLOP him? Oh, no, no."



Bernard Partridge.

THE HAPPY MEDIUM.

AUGUSTINE THE WIZARD (*cheerfully*). "HOW DOES THIS STRIKE YOU?"
MR. JOHN REDMOND. "H'M! NOT SO BAD—AS FAR AS IT GOES!"



OUR VILLAGE CRICKET CLUB. PRACTICE BEGINS.

WE DON'T THINK HE HAD A GRUDGE AGAINST THE NEW SCHOOLMASTER—ANYWAY SPINNER DID ASK HIM IF HE WOULDN'T PUT ON SOME PADS.

MR. PUNCH'S HARMLESS SELF-EDUCATOR.

THE difference between Tennis and Lawn-Tennis has been exhaustively dealt with by *The Daily Mail* in an entertaining article which combines the maximum of amusement and instruction; though the writer, probably from a praiseworthy fear of offending German susceptibilities, has somewhat strangely omitted to point out that the French names for the two games are *Jeu de Paume* and *Jeu de Paume-de-terre*, so called because in France lawn-tennis is generally played on earth-courts. In the all-important matter of helping the masses to educate themselves, Mr. Punch feels that he cannot do better than follow, however far behind, in the wake of the Prince of Pedagogues. Here, then, is a bright little article on Cricket which, without being exhaustive, gives a fair idea of the mysteries of this popular game.

CRICKET AND COUNTY CRICKET.

Although their titles are so much alike, there is a great dissimilarity between the games of Cricket and County Cricket.

County Cricket is generally played on Nottingham Marl, on which the gates or "wickets" are pitched. There is a third gate at the entrance to the walled-in ground, and the object of the players is to make this particular gate as large as possible. In Cricket, which is played on grass, there is no entrance-gate. In both games a club or "bat" (made of wood) and a hard leather ball are used.

There is, however, a great difference in the bowling at the two games. The bowler at County Cricket, instead of sending the ball straight to his opponent, has to direct it as nearly as possible out of his reach, either to the "off" or the "leg" side, from which it rebounds at all sorts of angles. If the batsman has a reputation and an average to keep up, he lets it severely alone. This is one of the principal strokes of the game, and without it County Cricket would not be what it is; nor would the matches last the regulation three days.

It is also a common stroke in County Cricket to hit the ball not with the bat but with the pads, which are made of white leather. It is this stroke with the pads which is one of the great points of the game, and many county players owe

much of their success to the clever manner in which they utilize their legs to guard their stumps.

A County Cricket ground is surrounded by a brick or stone wall, and the players are often known as "stone-wallers." Many balls which would go out of the ground at Cricket are blocked by the stone-wallers in County Cricket. There is also an inner boundary, made of rope, over or under which the spectator is allowed to peer at the players, risking the chance of a black eye if one of the stone-wallers should happen to open his shoulders. This, however, does not often happen out of Kent, which is known as the long-hop county from the way in which its batsmen treat their opponents' best length balls.

"Britain consumes 140,000,000 lbs. of currants yearly. Judged from a scientific standpoint, this enormous weight of currants is equal in nutritive value to 187,500,000 tons of lean beef."—*Liverpool Echo*.

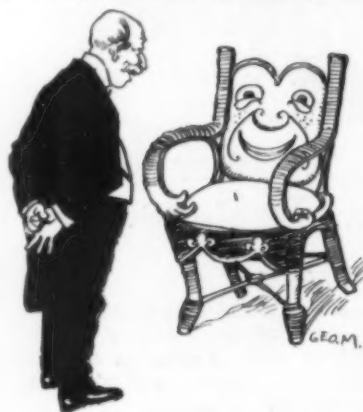
We are always glad to welcome new ideas, but this so upsets all our preconceived notions as to the values (nutritive and otherwise) of the common currant that we are reluctantly compelled to disbelieve it.

THE FUNNY FURNITURE CO.

OUR SPECIAL ADVERTISEMENT PAGE.

[This Advertisement has been carefully prepared by members of Mr. Punch's staff, who have not suffered in the process, having been not only paid by Mr. Punch, but presented with a number of charming and useful souvenirs by the obliged Company; ink, when friendly, being always thicker than water.]

It is well known that nothing is so inimical to longevity and good health as melancholy and tears. "Laugh and grow fat," says the proverb, as also, "Care killed the cat." A proverb, as is well known, is the wisdom of many and the wit of one; and proverbs cannot lie. It follows then that if we would live long and be well we must laugh. But how laugh? What better way than to be surrounded by the humorous? An Englishman's house is his castle, and if at every turn that castle makes him



laugh, what a happy life is his! The mission of the Funny Furniture Co. is to fill every home, no matter how humble, with laughter. Not ordinary laughter, but "laughter holding both his sides."

If all houses were furnished on our system, no one would ever go out at all. The theatres and music-halls would close. The comic papers would cease to appear.

The magistrates would retire.

Austrian bent-wood chairs a speciality. But how bent?

Ah!

That is our secret.

The wood is bent with laughter.

One of our staff cracks jokes in the Austrian woods, while these trees are yet saplings, and they double up.

All our tables set the company in a roar. No need for hosts to be witty and hostesses facetious, the table does it all. Just take a seat at once and see for yourself.

No bedroom is complete without one of our waggish wardrobes.

Try our side-splitting sideboards. One is enough for any house. You will be very rash if you buy two. Try and open them!

That's where the joke comes in.



Ask one of your friends casually if he would mind getting something out of the sideboard, and watch the result.

Try it on the new parlourmaid.

If you want another sideboard let it be one of our Buffoon Buffets.

They are equally funny. Try and carve on one of them.

Try our Droll Drawers that won't open and won't shut.

Try our Washstands that won't wash. Facetious fireplaces.

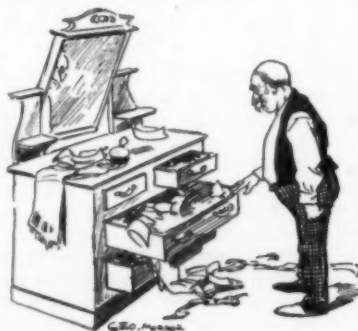
These are a great success, especially if one uses our special comic coal. Have one in the coldest room in the house, and put a visitor there when it's drawing. Then listen at the door. Roars of laughter guaranteed. Money returned if you don't ache.

Trick beds for visitors.

Apple-pie sheetings.

Revolving carpets.

Cushions with pins in them.



Chair seatings with cobbler's wax inlay.

Witty wall-papers.

Testimonials.

The Head Usher in Mr. Justice DARLING's Court writes: "I now laugh more of an evening than I do of a day."

The Editor of *The Pall Mall Gazette*



writes: "The wardrobe is funnier than 'In and Out.'"

Messrs. BARKER and VEDRENNE write: "Please send a set of your fire-irons with our compliments to Mr. SHAW."

Mr. JOSEPH LYONS writes: "I go to bed roaring every night."

EXTRAORDINARY INSTANCES OF LONGEVITY.

[By the courtesy of the Editor of *The Dictator*, who has supplied us with advance proofs, we are enabled to print the following selection from the letters which will appear in the next issue of our esteemed contemporary.]

[To the Editor of "*The Dictator*."]

SIR,—I am the happy possessor of a parrot which I have taught to shoulder a rifle and say "Free Trade for ever." This parrot, which was brought home by my grandfather Sir BEECHAM COCKLE, K.C.B., from the Andaman Islands in the year 1864, was then 140 years old, and last month we celebrated its 183rd birthday. About six months ago it nearly died of influenza, and lost almost all its tail feathers, but, thanks to careful nursing, it slowly recovered and is now in robust health. One result of its illness was very curious. For several weeks it suffered from partial aphasia, and instead of saying "Free Trade for ever," used to cry, "Give poor Polly a Preference." Strange to relate, its tail, which was previously a fine turquoise blue, is now a deep salmon pink, while the curvature of its beak is much more pronounced. I may add that although it has been a confirmed smoker for many years, it cannot be induced to touch anything stronger than cherry brandy. For many seasons it used to accompany me when I went out hunting, perched between the ears of my favourite mare *Pocahontas*, but as the new M.F.H. is a violent Tariff Reformer I have thought it wiser to leave it at home on these occasions.

I am, Sir,

OTIS P. JAGGS.

The Skelligs, Maida Vale.

[To the Editor of "*The Dictator*."]

SIR,—Your correspondent Mr. BOWLONG's story of a Bombay duck which

lived to the age of eighty-nine has touched me so deeply that I beg to enclose a postal-order for 15s. towards erecting a suitable mausoleum over the remains of this grand old feathered veteran.

I am, Sir, &c., PETER SWALLOW.

[To the Editor of "The Dictator."]

SIR,—On a recent visit to Egypt I was present at the excavation of a hermetically sealed sarcophagus. Contrary to expectation, there was no mummy in the sarcophagus, but if there had been, and the mummy had been alive, it would have been 3,000 years old. Comment is needless, but I think this is one of the most remarkable cases of inferential longevity on record.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,
ERNEST PAMBER.

[To the Editor of "The Dictator."]

SIR,—I have for the last thirty years been in the habit of taking my politics, my ethics and my views *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis* from the columns of *The Dictator*. About a year ago, however, my faith was slightly shaken by your editorial endorsement of a story relating how a Colonial archdeacon had trained a kangaroo to use the typewriter and act as his amanuensis. In last week's issue you append a similar endorsement to the narrative of Mr. H. OAKES, of Cramborough, who states that he has in his service an old gardener whose great-grandfather witnessed the landing of WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR. It is painful to sever old ties, but this is the last straw, and henceforth I must transfer my allegiance to a journal which imposes a less arduous strain on the credulity of its subscribers.

The Chestnuts, I am, Sir, &c.,
Choubent. ALFRED JOSSE.

[We deeply regret Mr. JOSSE's decision, but Mr. OAKES, as we have often found on previous occasions, is a man of notorious and peculiar veracity, and we have no reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of his story.—Ed. Dictator.]

[To the Editor of "The Dictator."]

SIR,—I confess that Mr. H. OAKES's story strikes me, if you will pardon an expressive neologism, as a bit thick. It seems to me that the gardener, being presumably a man of imperfect education, may have confused WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR with WILLIAM THE THIRD. Or perhaps his great-grandfather did really see the event *put on the stage*. Or thirdly, he may have witnessed it in a previous incarnation.

I am, Sir, &c.,
A MODERATE SCEPTIC.

[We are delighted to publish "A MODERATE SCEPTIC's" ingenious but unconvincing letter. For ourselves, we cling unhesitatingly to the truth of Mr. H. OAKES's story, which beautifully combines "simple faith" with "Norman blood." Remember, the man was not a fisherman or a



He. "SO YOUR HUSBAND HAS GIVEN UP SMOKING? THAT WANTS A PRETTY STRONG WILL."
She. "WELL, I'VE GOT ONE."

greengrocer, but a gardener—one of a class whose integrity has never been impugned.—Ed. Dictator.]

[To the Editor of "The Dictator."]

SIR,—I trust that, in view of the interest you take in longevity, you will lend your powerful advocacy to the support of special old-age pensions for persons of 150 years of age and upwards. I enclose an interesting actuarial statement made out by my friend, Professor DOTTI (who holds the Chair of Comparative Alienology in the University of Bologna), which I trust you will find space to print in your valued paper. I am, Sir, &c.,

(COUNT) SERGIUS CHUMPOFFSKY.

[COUNT CHUMPOFFSKY's admirable suggestion will, we feel sure, commend itself to all humane readers. We deeply regret that we cannot find space for Professor DOTTI's statistics, which

have all the fascination of a fairy tale, but by way of proving our genuine interest in this movement we are prepared to guarantee a year's free subscription to *The Dictator* to any person who can furnish satisfactory proof of having attained his 150th birthday.—Ed. Dictator.]

From the Regulations of the Birmingham Public Library:—

"A person shall not smoke tobacco or any like substance in any part of the library."

This is rather a nasty one for some cigarette smokers.

It is only KIPLING who knows all the naval technicalities, but any landsman can grasp the full significance of this:—

"Fleet arrived Lagos at noon, anchoring in two lines astern of each other."—*Naval and Military Record*.

THE CRY OF THE RUSSIAN CHILDREN.*

WHAT cry was that? Methought I heard a cry,
Faint and far off and pitiful and weak.
No, no, it was the sigh
Of the west wind that stirred the opening leaves;
Or did some swallow, late returned and meek,
Twitter her humble gladness from the new-found eaves?
Again! It is a cry! And yet again!
And first it swells, and then it seems to fade—
A cry of infinite weariness
And deep distress;
A cry of little children spent with pain,
A cry to make the boldest heart afraid,
A cry of mothers fighting off with prayer
The black-winged angel of despair,
Or mourning by the grave
Of children whom nor love nor tears availed to save.

Louder than rolling drum,
More piercing than the clamorous bugle's notes,
From Russia's stricken wastes the cry has come
Of many thousand tender little throats,

Soon to be dumb
Unless— But we are very very far,
And we have much to do
Under our brighter and more fortunate star
The whole day through—
Joyance and high delight and festival
For great and small
At home, and our own children claim their share:
We have no gift to spare
For Russia's children, and this cry of fear
Was but a dream-sound buzzing in our ear.

Is this our answer? No, it cannot be!
We cannot choose but hear. This is no dream
That makes imagined things to seem:
This is God's truth that pleads for charity.
For God, who set the nations far apart,
Estranged by thought and speech,
He bound us each to each,
Heart that can suffer unto suffering heart.
In His high Name we cannot let the cry
Of little children go unheeded by.

For He was once Himself a little child,
Humble and mild,
And loved all children; and I think His face
In that eternal place
Where still He waits and watches us will smile
For love of pity if we stretch our hand
And let our gifts go forth o'er many a mile
Of stormy sea and many leagues of land.
Hark, how the little children make their plea,
Their pitiful plea for help. What shall our answer be?

R. C. L.

* THE following is an extract from a letter which Mr. Punch has received from Dr. KENNARD, formerly House Physician at the Children's Hospital, Great Ormond Street, and now resident at Samara, Russia:—

"There are over 300,000 children in Samara alone who need milk and cannot get it: cows give no milk, for they in their turn feed off the decayed straw from the roof tops: then for want of milk these children and babies of the earliest age are forced to eat black bread, raw young cucumber, and anything that comes along—'shto Bok poslaet' (whatever God happens to send), as the peasants pathetically state in their appeals. I have myself seen young babies with their mothers eating 'bread' which has amongst its other constituents acorns and powdered oak bark, and the mothers have wept bitterly when this was taken from

them as a specimen, for, as they said, it was their 'food for one day.' The result of this terrible diet is, of course, death and disease; and it is on behalf of these unfortunate children that I appeal to Mr. Punch to touch the great fountain of sympathy always to be found in the British public."

Mr. Punch ventures, on behalf of these poor starving Russian children, to ask the assistance of those friends of his who have, before now, made a splendid response to his appeal in the cause of suffering childhood. Contributions may be sent (either directly or through Messrs. BRADBURY & AGNEW, Punch Office, 10, Bouverie Street, E.C.) to Mr. E. W. BROOKS, Dixon House, 72, Fenchurch Street, E.C., by whom they will be safely forwarded to the Relief Organisation at Moscow, to be distributed in Samara through private channels by competent doctors, nurses, and lady volunteers. Government officials or agents will not be allowed to have any hand in the distribution of this fund.

TIME-EATING.

The Daily Mail, discussing the question as to whether an orchestra in restaurants is an aid to digestion, is of opinion that many people under such conditions are unable to eat without keeping time to the music. We have long suffered from that popular nuisance the time-beater, who punctuates the melody with insistent feet in a theatre or concert-hall. We are now introduced to a more harmless variety—the time-eater, who seems to be a sort of cross between a gastronome and a metronome. Such devotees of dental rhythm would be less sinning than sinned against, if a second HENRY WOOD were marshalling the more bellicose and chaotic passages of TCHAIKOVSKY'S "1812" with cross accents and imitation cannon accompaniment. We consider that, if time-eating is likely to prevail to any great extent, a qualified medical man should be engaged in every melodious restaurant to prescribe and conduct the musical menu. He should see to it that the programme ends with a full cadence, and that occasional bar's rests have been duly interspersed with free treatment of the bass for the benefit of the thirstier members of his clientèle. He will preserve a judicious balance between common and triple measures, and refrain from choking his hearers by a too sudden dislocation of their masticatory beat. MASCAGNI and LEONCAVALLO, therefore, must be applied with caution, if at all. In future, the expression "Time! gentlemen, please" shall not be taken to indicate that it is 12.30 A.M., but that certain members of the audience with defective ear are, so to speak, out of jaw, and eating like a peal of bells.

Our Strenuous Policemen.

FROM an advertisement in The Daily Mail:

"I was unable to sit up in bed, thus being kept from duty—I was in the Metropolitan Police."

The Simple Life.

"U. F. Minister, experienced in large congregation, would occupy pulpit in lieu of Manse during July."

OR is it the result of a bet?

"MASSAGE.--Wanted a Masseur to apply massage."—East London Dispatch.

THIS makes it quite clear that he won't have to feed the rabbits.

The Daily Mail of May 2nd contained a notice of the Opera, 95 lines in length. No fewer than 13 lines were devoted to a criticism of the performance. Who says now that we are not a musical nation?



Parson (who has been visiting the school, to son of local groom). "I'M SORRY TO HEAR YOU SPELL BADLY, JOHNNIE. NOW TELL ME, S-A-D-D-L-E. WHAT IS THAT?" (No answer.) "YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT! WHAT IS IT YOUR FATHER PUTS ON A HORSE EVERY DAY?"
 Johnnie. "A BOB EACH WAY, SIR."

TABOOMANIA.

Mr. Punch is so powerfully impressed by the action of the Lord Chamberlain in suppressing all performances of the *Mikado* (and thereby throwing into confusion a large number of provincial theatrical engagements) that he is moved to follow suit. He therefore forbids his readers, all and several, and the British Public at large, to continue the laceration of national and foreign susceptibilities by the employment in speech, writing, singing, gramophoning or marconigram, of any expressions appearing in the subjoined list:—

"To take French leave."
 "Made in Germany."
 "Castles in Spain."
 "He is full of Dutch courage."
 "Scratch a Russian, and you'll find a Tartar."
 "He's a regular Turk."
 "Spoiling the Egyptians."
 "Can the Ethiopian change his skin?"

"Lo, the poor Indian!"
 "For ways that are dark, the Heathen Chinese is peculiar."
 "Go to Jericho!"
 "They didn't know everything down in Judee."
 "Caledonia, stern and wild."
 "How very Hibernian!"
 "Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief!"
 "To behave like a boor."

JOHN BULL has so many *ententes* on hand just now, that Mr. Punch is living in momentary terror lest any of them should be imperilled by some chance and indiscreet allusion dropped at a Little Peddlington Penny-reading. What if the Republic of Hayti, say, should get wind of the same! He feels, in fact, that the thoughtless whistling of a Peckham school-boy may precipitate an international conflict, in the present electrical state of the political atmosphere, and is, therefore, constrained to appoint himself Censor-in-chief.

THE TRIALS OF AN ARTIST.

I HAD a flannel shirt of purple hue,
 A choice example of the hosier's art;
 There came a friendly man who had to do
 With washing, and removed it in a cart.
 Oft on a Monday had I seen this done,
 The sign of yet another week begun.

I had a picture, mostly purple too,
 A nymph reclining on a marble slab,
 And this another friendly man withdrew
 And bore it from me in a four-wheeled cab.

"Now for a time," quoth I, "my labours cease
 Ere I begin another masterpiece."

Alas, the nymph returned—her journey vain,

A week she kept me in acute suspense;
 And with the washing came the shirt again,

Yet with this all-important difference—
 It had (unlike to any work of mine)
 Hung for a few brief hours upon the line.



THE JOYS OF TOURING. No. 2.—THE SPANISH FORD.

THIS IS THE SORT OF THING THAT MAKES YOU WISH YOU HAD TRIED THE OTHER ROUTE, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW THE LANGUAGE, AND THE CONVERSATION-BOOK FOR THE USE OF MOTORISTS DOESN'T CONTAIN ANYTHING BEARING ON THE SITUATION!

ARCTURUS.

["Arcturus, which is a gigantic orb equal to some twelve or thirteen hundred suns like our own, is flying through space at the rate of some 257 miles per second in a straight line for ever. . . . If PROLEMY were now alive it would require all his skill to perceive that Arcturus held a different position from that in which he used to study it."—Mr. W. E. Garrett Fisher in "The Tribune."]

ARCTURUS is whirled across space
 In a race
 With himself at a pace
 Which takes him through heaven,
 Professors have reckoned,
 At two fifty-seven
 Full miles to the second!
 Just imagine him fizzing
 And whizzing;
 His size,
 As he flies,
 Is a mass of twelve hundred and more times the sun.
 In an eager endeavour
 He dashes for ever
 Straight on with no possible object but fun.
 For in vain is the pace of this monarch of stars,
 Who has burst through the bars
 That impeded his force:
 In the years that have gone
 He has hardly put on
 Half an inch to the visible length of his course.
 Now to fly and get on is no end of a game,
 But to fly without moving, to stay in the same
 Spot
 Is not

What a planet with any respect
 For himself and the fame
 Of his name
 Would select.

For if PROLEMY saw him to-day
 He would say,
 "You're a run-away star,
 But you haven't got far,
 And, forgive the remark, you were just where you are
 When I saw you some thousands of seasons ago.
 For a star of your parts you're confoundedly slow."

What the deuce
 Is the use
 Of this fever and fuss,
 If Arcturus is still so absurdly like us;
 If, in spite of his chances,
 He never advances;
 If he breaks all the records for scurry and fizz,
 But with all his impatience remains where he is?

And yet he is whirled across space
 In a race
 With himself at a pace
 Which takes him through heaven,
 Professors have reckoned,
 At two fifty-seven
 Full miles to the second!

Tis.

A Novel Pose.

"LIVING STATUARY.

ATTITUDE OF THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL."

Daily Chronicle.



A WARY BIRD.

PEACE. "WON'T YOU LET ME TRIM YOUR CLAWS?"

GERMAN EAGLE. "THANKS! I PREFER THEM LONG!"

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOSY, M.P.

House of Commons, Monday, April 29.—Much talk buzzing about relations between Lords and Commons. Evidently time close at hand when life-and-death struggle will begin. Meanwhile little incident happening this afternoon vividly illustrates condition of affairs.

Questions going forward in ordinary course. Some stir in Lobby. Serjeant-at-Arms, on guard by the Bar, turned round intently listening. Suddenly whipped out of chair, hanger by his side, and made for door opening on Central Lobby. Shrewd suspicion was justified. Stealthily passing adown the corridor from the House of Lords came Black Rod, carrying in right hand the symbol of his office. Was evidently marching on House of Commons.

As at a critical epoch in his life GRANDOLPH "forgot GOSCHEN," so Black Rod forgot Serjeant-at-Arms. Alone he stood by the wide-open heavy oak door. At the moment only Black Rod in view, swiftly approaching like a thunder-cloud over a speckless sky. But who should say that behind him, possibly approaching by another doorway, there was not moving a column led by the reckless Young WEMYSS resolved to make an end of the House of Commons before C.B. had given final touches to his Bill making an end of the Lords?

The flashing eye of ERSKINE OF CARDROSS, glinting round the Lobby, took all in at a glance. In a moment he had flung to the open door and, with one sweep of his right arm, barred it.

The Commons were saved.

What Admiral Sir HENRY STEPHENSON said, when, continuing his march, he almost knocked his nose against the suddenly closed door, was uttered under his breath. Perhaps, since he has been to sea a good deal, it was just as well. Looking the door up and down, finding it impossible to scale, equally hopeless to batter down, he humbly knocked. Perhaps, if the door were unbarred, opened ever so little, he might get his foot inside, put his shoulder to the wood, and hold his own till Young WEMYSS and his men should swoop down and take possession of the place.

Again he forgot ERSKINE OF CARDROSS. Must get up very early in the morning to catch that weasel asleep.

The Serjeant-at-Arms pressed a spring. A secret panel slid back, and

Black Rod with a start found himself confronted by a stern countenance framed in old oak.

"Who is it?" demanded ERSKINE OF CARDROSS.

"Me," replied Black Rod meekly.

"What do you want?"

"I have brought a message from the Lords."

"Oh!" said the Serjeant-at-Arms. After quick survey of Lobby perceiving no sign of predatory Young WEMYSS, he opened the door, and Black Rod, duly announced, entered.

Turned out that he had merely come on ordinary mission to bid the Commons attend in other House to hear assent given by Royal Commission to various Bills. But the dramatic scene at the door, here faithfully described, lifts the curtain from the placid appearance of



EJECTED.

Sir Horace Plunkett. "Well, Mr. R-d-m-n-d, you and D-l-l-n have had your way! You've got rid of me, though I was a good friend to Ireland!"

Mr. John R-d-m-n-d. "Ah! that is precisely your offence. You represented an alternative to us, so you had to go!"

things at Westminster, and for a moment reveals actuality.

Having once gained admission, Black Rod succeeded in putting everybody, especially himself, at perfect ease. Memories linger round the Chair of one of his predecessors in office who, arriving at the Table and proposing to deliver his formal message, was struck dumb. Nothing of that sort the matter with Admiral STEPHENSON. He walked up the floor with slightly rolling gait as if he trod the familiar quarterdeck. Arrived at the Table, he claimed attention of House by slightly raising the gold-tipped black rod held in his right hand, and in unfaltering tone delivered his message. By way of illustrating the universality of its application, he, as he proceeded, with courteous motion of his head, alternately bent towards the Treasury Bench and that on which the Opposition Leaders were seated.

His errand accomplished, he jauntily went astern, pulling up somewhere about the spot where on deck a windlass might stand, and ran half a cable's length to starboard so as to make way for the SPEAKER leading the procession to the House of Lords.

The PREMIER not yet having arrived, WINSTON and JOHN BURNS fell in behind the SPEAKER as representing His Majesty's Government.

"Happy Ministry!" exclaimed the MEMBER FOR SARK. "They have every advantage, including apt alliteration's artful aid—Blenheim and Battersea."

Business done.—Second reading of Scottish Small Holdings Bill moved.

House of Lords, Tuesday.—A subtle sartorial distinction marks COURTNEY'S return to the Parliamentary stage by the Peers' entrance. Whilst still with us in the Commons, he was accustomed to add a welcome touch of colour to the gloom below the Gangway by wearing a waistcoat whose almost aggressive shade of buff was not elsewhere seen on land or sea. On birthdays and other festive occasions he added a blue coat with brass buttons, an arrangement that gratified literary taste by recalling the buff and blue of *The Edinburgh Review*.

This evening, moving the second reading of a Bill designed to give the system of proportional representation a start in the field of municipal elections, he was content to display a waistcoat much less lurid in hue than what seemed appropriate whilst he sat among the Radicals in the Commons.

The MEMBER FOR SARK thinks it is our old acquaintance that has inevitably suffered modification of high colouring in the process of continuous washing. I prefer to find in the change a graceful adaptation to circumstances natural in a highly cultured mind. In conjunction with an admirably reasoned speech, delivered without the assistance of a note of manuscript, it won over the Lords, who gave the Bill a second reading and referred it to a Select Committee.

Business done.—After two nights' debate exclusively by Scottish Members, Commons read Scotch Small Holdings Bill a second time, and sent it on to Grand Scotch Committee. This, as Mr. REDDY truly says, is "opening the door to the thin end of the wedge of Home Rule."

House of Commons, Friday.—"I have always recognised in Sir HORACE PLUNKETT one of the most formidable Unionist statesmen who has ever been in Ireland.

His aim is to undermine and destroy the Nationalist Party."

Thus JOHN DILLON in debate the other day on the proposal to retire the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture in Ireland. It was not designed as a personal tribute to high capacity and true patriotism. Nevertheless as such it stands. Not since the Irish question developed have truer words been spoken. Successive British Ministries have tried their hand at repressing the political agitator, whether earning a weekly wage at Westminster, or keeping the peasantry and the town populations up to the mark at home. With their regiments of soldiers, their battalions of constabulary, their absolute command over the public purse, none of them has done such effective service as HORACE PLUNKETT.

An Irishman born and bred, with intimate knowledge of the necessities of his country, keenest sympathy with the sorely handicapped farmer, he perceived that what was needed was the establishment of a system of co-operation which should find markets for the produce of small holdings. To that work he has for twenty years given up his life. Thirteen years ago, he founded the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, whose work proved so beneficent that after closely watching it for five years PRINCE ARTHUR, who knows Ireland thoroughly, resolved to create a new State Department to take over the work.

HORACE PLUNKETT was placed at its head with a salary of £1500 a year. Not a penny has found its way into his private pouch. It has been freely given to the furtherance of a national object that lies at his heart. A dangerous man this. A little more and O'THELO's occupation will be gone. So REDMOND *ainé* and his friends persistently clamoured for the dismissal of HORACE PLUNKETT, a demand to which the strongest Ministry of modern times after some resistance gallantly yielded. After Whitsuntide, the Board of Agriculture in Ireland will know its Founder no more. But his works will follow him.

Business done.—Intestate Husband's Estate (Scotland) and other epoch-making Bills read a second time.

Railway Candour.

"The times shown on this Card are only intended to fix the time before which the Trains will not start."

Of course it seems easy enough now, but for a long time we wondered what the times did mean, and imagined that they were possibly some secret code. Strange that this solution never occurred to us.

CRICKET CHATTER.

TOMKINS' PROSPECTS.

BUMPBROOK GOSSIP.

It is a relief sometimes to turn from the so-called first-class cricket at Lord's and the Oval to consideration of the game as it is played in the clubs and villages. People are apt to forget that the club cricketer of to-day is often the county cricketer of to-morrow, and *vice versa*. Having dealt already in these columns with the prospects for the season of C. B. FRY and Kent, I gladly now (in answer to many inquiries) devote some of my valuable space to the lesser devotees of the game.

HORACE TOMKINS is looking forward to another excellent season. As most of my readers know, Mr. TOMKINS has a residential qualification for the Upper Tooting 3rd XI., but, like the sportsman he is, prefers to play for the club of his birth, viz., Carshalton Rovers (D). Mr. TOMKINS will again field at short leg both ends, and no doubt his work in this position will be as valuable as ever. It may not be generally known that he once kept wicket for the Rovers, and acted as an excellent medium for conveying the ball back from the longstop to the bowler.

The Rovers (D) are hoping great things from Mr. TOMKINS with the bat this season. "HORACE" has kept himself in good form during the winter with *The Jubilee Book of Cricket*, and now has PALAIRET's off-drive to perfection, while friends speak highly of his "HURST hooking a short-pitched ball to leg." Mr. TOMKINS will again (as last season) go in above the extras.

Blackheath (F) are touring in Shepherd's Bush during Whitsun. It is by this means, rather than by the time-serving talk of politicians, that the distant parts of our Empire are bound together.

The quarrel between the Highbury Quidnuncs and Canonbury Olympic has been settled amicably. It arose, our readers will remember, owing to the fact that at the end of last season the Olympic "approached" the Quidnuncs' fast bowler, and induced him to take up his residence in Canonbury. As a result, the Highbury team unanimously decided that the Olympic should not be played this season. However, it has now been discovered that, owing to a strained arm, the cause of all this trouble has lost most of his pace; and so the match will take place as usual.

Village cricket generally starts comparatively late, but I have just heard a

good report of the prospects of the Castle Bumpbrook eleven. To begin with, the Committee have been seriously considering the question of the ground; and, at a meeting at the school-house last Monday, it was decided that an effort should be made to keep the cows off the pitch on the morning of a match, particularly if the ground was at all soft. An amendment, however, was moved and carried by Farmer COBB to the effect that this should not apply to the three Wednesday fixtures. A half-hearted suggestion by the Vicar that no cattle should ever be allowed on the pitch at all was ridiculed; and on the Treasurer pointing out that they had no funds for the purchase of a mowing-machine, the proposal was withdrawn. The Committee hope that larger scores will now be the order of the day.

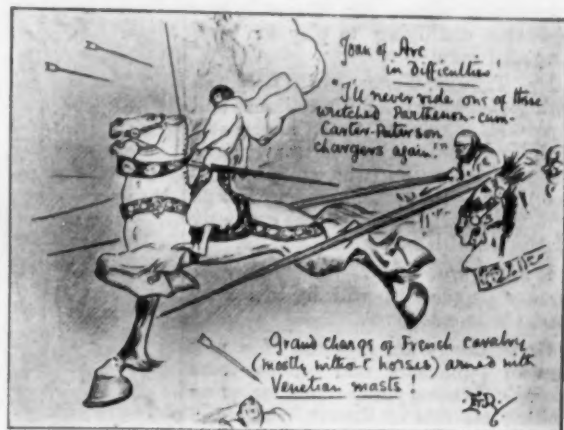
The personnel of the team has undergone one or two changes since last year. In the first place, the Member has succeeded in getting Mr. SIDNEY BUXTON to give the district another delivery of letters. This means that the postman will not be able to turn out again, and as he is one of the steadiest bats on the side, the whole village is indignant, and will vote Tory to a man at the next election. Then the wicket-keeper, who has been hit on the head often enough without injury, received a ball on the knee-cap at practice the other night, and will not be able to play again. I have authority to say that he really is disabled, and that the fact that the Vicar, who captains the team, has been sending to the neighbouring town for his meat has nothing whatever to do with it. To crown all, the best bowler has had his licence taken away, and is moving to the next village.

There are, however, compensations. The doctor's son has just been sent down from Cambridge; and old GEORGE, who (in the first match last season) caught his foot in a hole while trying a short run, and broke his leg, is now well again. Moreover, GEORGE's grandson is back from sea, and is sure to prove an acquisition.

Returning to first-class cricket, I am in a position to state that Mr. PERCY W. SHERWELL, the Captain of the South Africans, is known to his friends and comrades as "PERCY"—not "PERCE," as erroneously stated in a contemporary.

The Daily Telegraph referred to Mr. SANTLEY the other day as being "supported by a company not one of whom was out of the cradle—most not even in it—half a century ago," and it is supposed that parts at any rate of the sentence are correct.

ROYAL ACADEMY PICTURES — RE-VARNISHED.



LITERARY GOSSIP.

BY ONE WHO KNOWS.

UNDER the title, *The Vigil*, Mr. HAROLD BEGBIE—"our only HAROLD," as Dr. CLIFFORD is said recently to have called him in conversation with a friend—has written a novel which tells the story of two souls walking to eternity on different roads. Had the roads been the same, Mr. BEGBIE would not, he has told a reviewer, have written the book. They are obviously not parallel roads, or they could not both reach the same spot, as EUCLID was at some pains to point out.

The best novel of the day has been issued by so many different publishers, and is by so many different authors, that it is not easy to name it in a paragraph; but you may be confident that it exists, and a postcard to any firm will provide you with title and price.

Mr. G. L. JESSOP, the well-known *Daily Mail* cricketer, having been selected by a weekly paper as its judge of prize competition verses, Mr. WATTS-DUNTON meditates qualifying to play for some congenial county.

Mr. THOMAS WRIGHT, of Olney, an author well known for his reticence and severe standards of taste, has nearly completed two lives, each in two volumes, one of ZIMMERMANN (who wrote on solitude), and the other of St. SIMEON STYLITES. Both books will be copiously illustrated with snap-shots, &c., &c.

It is not true that *The Daily Mirror's* literary supplement will be edited by Prof. CHURTON COLLINS.

Great things are expected of a new firm of publishers who promise some exceedingly novel publications, including shilling reprints of RUSKIN, a series of sixpenny novels by great writers, such as DICKENS and JANE AUSTEN, and a new story by Mr. LE QUEUX.

According to the Man of Kent in *The British Weekly* Mr. SWINBURNE's birthday was a great success, and will be repeated next year.

The gifted author of *The House of Quiet* (by which his publishing house is not meant), *The Upton Letters*, *The Gate of Death*, and other works of profound seriousness, is just putting the finishing touches to three books in the same genre, entitled respectively *Eighty at Forty*, *The Bottom of the Well*, and *Press the Button*.

The next number of *Plasmon Pellets* will contain an anonymous article on some subject of public interest.

It is rumoured that Germany will give its hearty support to the Hague Conference only on condition that Dis-Harmsworthment is discussed.

COVENT KINDERGARTEN.

OPERETTAS BY AND FOR THE YOUNG.

ON Thursday the combatants in the Ring took a night off, and the audience was indulged with a juvenile entertainment. A moderate House, giving its best jewels a rest, listened with tolerant condescension to a thinly-orchestrated trifle thrown off by MOZART when he was just a dozen years old and knew no better. It served at least to correct the erroneous impression that infant prodigies have only recently been invented. In *Bastien und Bastienne* one sees the childlike taste for melody and magic which MOZART, who never lost his sweet tooth, was to develop in later years when the *Zaubersackpfeife* of *Colas* was replaced by the *Zauberflöte*. More magic followed in HUMPERDINCK's *Hänsel und Gretel*, and it is perhaps a pity that the Management should not have arranged



Two very fine children. Hänsel and Gretel.

a better contrast. A little of the gilt was taken from this delightful study in gingerbread by the obvious maturity of the children in the title-rôle. Fräulein HEMPEL, as *Gretel*, had the air of an adult and colossal *poupée*, and the *Hänsel* of Fräulein FIEBIGER, though his face was fairly boyish, was not built, for the rest, on strictly youthful lines. But the gaiety of heart and voice which they brought to the interpretation of the fascinating music made amends for physical improbabilities. The delicacy of HUMPERDINCK's work easily survived the strain put upon it by the disproportionate massiveness of its setting; but some of the situations suffer from being too long-drawn-out. The angel business and the preliminary devilments of the witch (played by Frau REINL with a fine rolling gait and a voice that cracked very pleasantly) might well have been curtailed. Herr ZADOR, who was the wizard in *Bastien und Bastienne*, but subsequently,

as *Peter* in *Hänsel und Gretel*, took as firm an attitude against sorcery as his drunken condition could command, played both his parts with an admirable discrimination. *Peter*, by the way, was the only man in the opera; for the *Devman* and the *Sandman* were both ladies, the latter wearing a full white beard; and though I am not sure about the sex of the cuckoo-clock it sang mezzo-soprano. O. S.

DANGEROUS DECLARATIONS.

["Mr. MAX PEMBERTON added that he showed the policeman the speedometer, and the constable appeared to be quite agitated. 'Was the constable agitated before or after hearing your name?' asked the prosecuting solicitor. Mr. PEMBERTON, after a moment's hesitation, replied: 'Probably after.' . . . The magistrate dismissed the case."—*Westminster Gazette*, April 26th.]

WHEN HALL is hurrying to the train And tells the porter "I am CAINE!" Tears from the porter flow like rain.

When WILLIAM, entering a pew, Unconsciously remarks "LE QUEUX," Vicars turn pink and vergers blue.

When NEWNES is dining at the Ritz, And murmurs to himself "Tit-Bits," The waiters and the chef have fits.

When LEE declines his dexter lid, And tells the inspector "I am SID," The bus at once begins to skid.

When HENRY ARTHUR whispers "JONES" To cheer a pauper breaking stones, The pauper generally groans.

When GEORGE, inside a tram close packed, Cries "ALEXANDER!" it's a fact They have to read the Riot Act.

When BERNARD, ordering sea-kale, Says "G. B. S.," greengrocers quail And grow unnaturally pale.

When PARKER haunts the Zoo, and when He tells the keepers "LOUIS N.," They shelter in the lions' den.

When RICHARDSON a visit pays And asked "What name?" his name betrays, Stout butlers faint from sheer amaze.

When RUDYARD buys a mutton chop, And adds, "I'm KIPLING," butchers flop, And panic decimates the shop.

When ANTHONY salutes the POPE With the announcement "I am HOPE," The staidest Cardinals elope.

When BEERBOHM, crossing o'er the sea, Informs a simple tar "I'm TREE," It gives the simple tar D. T.

When SILAS to the KING says "HOCKING," The consequences are so shocking, Four continents are set a-rocking.

The Journalistic Touch.

"Mr. JESSOP has no peer, and few equals." *Leicester Daily Post.*

CHARIVARIA.

"GERMANY is forging ahead," says Mrs. ALEC TWEEDIE in *Chambers' Journal*. The imitation of British trade-marks by German merchants is indeed a great evil which cannot be pointed out too often.

The Hon. THOMAS BENT, Premier of Victoria, is, we are told, known in Australia as "The Singing Premier." We are afraid, however, that, if he wants Preference, he will have to whistle for it.

It was feared at one time that H.M.S. *Indefatigable* would arrive too late to quell the disturbances at St. Lucia, but fortunately the rioting continued until she turned up.

The Admiralty are taking great pains to keep all details relating to the new Royal Yacht a secret. It will be remembered that our rivals learned what to avoid from studying her predecessor.

An improved type of collision mat is shortly to be issued to the Fleet. We are afraid that there will be no difficulty in finding opportunities to test the new appliance.

The categorical statement that the LORD CHAMBERLAIN was responsible for the ban on *The Mikado* disposes of the rumour that the treaty between Great Britain and Japan contained several clauses on the subject.

Archdeacon COLLEY has won his case, and Mr. MASKELYNE is said to be sorry he spook.

Also it is considered unlikely that the ARCHDEACON will ever touch spirits again.

At the Entrance Examination for the Academy of Dramatic Art held last week nearly fifty per cent. of the candidates were rejected. It is thought that most of these will become dramatic critics.

Sir CHARLES HOLROYD has been rearranging the pictures at the National Gallery, and there he has the advantage of the President of the Royal Academy. Sir CHARLES has not received a single complaint from the painters whose works he has skied.

"GIBSON," says a contemporary, "is like a tremendous monument: he never comes down from his pedestal except in the biting humour of his foot-notes." The tragedy of our London statues is worse still: they never in any circumstances come down from their pedestals.

Professor SYLVANUS THOMPSON declares



First Business Man (seated). "AWFULLY SORRY I COULDN'T DINE WITH YOU LAST NIGHT, OLD MAN, BUT I WAS AWAY FOR THE WEEK-END. ONLY CAME BACK THIS MORNING. 'BLIGED TO DO IT THESE STRENUOUS TIMES."

Second B. M. "YES, I KNOW. WELL, LOOK HERE, COME TO-NIGHT."

First B. M. "CAN'T, OLD MAN. GOIN' AWAY FOR THE WEEK-END AGAIN!"

that an umbrella of modern make held outside the shop window of an optician will cause the needle of a compass to move. We have long noticed the magnetic attraction one's best umbrella possesses, even for persons other than the owner.

By some curious weather freak Cheltenham was plunged into utter darkness for half an hour one afternoon last week: and when light broke again it was found that a number of domestic fowls were peacefully roosting on their perches under the impression that night had fallen. The language of the birds on discovering that they had been duped is said to have been very bitter.

Since Dr. CLIFFORD arrived in Geneva, says *The British Weekly*, there have

been three avalanches and an earthquake. It is hoped that Mr. M'KENNA will make provision against this kind of contingency in any future legislation for the relief of Passive Resisters.

If the Government is strong it is also humane. It has decided that the House of Lords shall not be abolished until after Whitsuntide, so that the Peers may enjoy their holidays at Margate, Yarmouth, Blackpool, and elsewhere. The Peers, it is rumoured, are what our French friends would call "*profondément touchés*" by this unexpected concession.

Exception is being taken in certain quarters to "Living Statues," and a demand has been made that the SELDOMS shall become the NEVERS.

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

The Pinch of Prosperity (MURRAY) is by HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL, and it starts like this. *Daphne* and *Bridget* are twins, and you simply can't tell them apart—except by their clothes. One day *Daphne* and *Bridget* disguise themselves by changing bangles, and meet *Chips* and *Arthur*. *Arthur* is attracted by *Bridget*, whom he believes to be *Daphne*, and *Chips* by *Daphne*, whom he believes to be *Bridget*. (All right so far?) They then resume their original parts, with the result that *Arthur* falls in love with *Daphne* under the impression that she is the *Daphne* who first attracted him, but who really (of course) was *Bridget*, and *Chips* falls in love with *Bridget* under the impression, &c., &c., &c., only the other way round. *Daphne* and *Bridget*, however, had fallen in love with *Chips* and *Arthur* respectively at the first go, so they change bangles again. *Arthur* now proposes to *Bridget*, whom he imagines to be the girl that he loved as *Daphne*, under the impression that she was the *Bridget* to whom he was introduced as *Daphne*, and *Chips* proposes to *Daphne* whom he imagines to be the girl that he loved as *Bridget* under the impression At this point I turned back to the preface, and discovered that the book was written in 1903. So I hurled it away, and picked up *Her Son* (author and publisher as before). This proved to be a stylish melodrama with a hero called *Dick*. *Dick*—like all *Dicks* in fiction—comes a cropper in his love affairs but I don't feel equal to describing another plot. It is sufficient to say that the style is rather cloying; but that when you get used to the limelight the story is quite interesting.

According to NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE (and the title-page of G. G. CHATTERTON's latest novel) "the word 'impossible' is to be found only in the Dictionary of Fools." If that be true, and I have no reason to doubt it, *The Dictionary of Fools* (as the Novel is called), which is published by Mr. JOHN LONG, cannot be the one that NAPOLEON meant, for the story is all so possible that it is only very moderately interesting. It is about a girl who believes herself to be left entirely without friends. It turns out that she has some, after all, and two or three of them fall in love with her. She, being in *The Dictionary of Fools*, and doubtless wishing to keep NAPOLEON's idea in countenance, finds that it is impossible to marry more than one of them, and this she does quite satisfactorily. I blush to confess that several times I have detected myself turning over as many as two pages at once without acutely regretting it.

Bachelor uncles (and similar Fairy Godmothers) who are

looking out for birthday presents—to give, of course—should jot down in their pocket-books Mr. PATTEN WILSON's little volume *Nature Round the House* (LONGMANS). It is for very young nephews and nieces (or godchildren), and should, I think, after the formal presentation, be reclaimed surreptitiously and placed in parental hands to be read aloud. It treats of Viperidæ, Cuculidæ, Mustelidæ, Coleoptera, Hymenoptera, Formicidæ, Orthoptera, Blattidæ, Lepidoptera, Araneæ, and many other monsters, but under Mr. WILSON's care they roar you as gently as any sucking dove, and the author's own excellent illustrations make you feel quite fond of them.

Benedict Kavanagh (ARNOLD) is a disappointing book. There are junctures at which it promises to approach interest.

These are exclusively connected with the hero's grandmother, and as she appears only twice on the scene, hers is not a predominating influence. Mr. BIRMINGHAM sets out with the evident intention of describing daily life in Ireland not unconnected with politics. He fails in the endeavour, wearies the reader with arid wastes that lead no-whither, finally affronting him by detailed account of a drunken orgie rushed into by some commonplace persons financed with a five-pound note won at a horse-race.

THEO. DOUGLAS, the author of *One or Two*, is not sure whether it is possible to interest the reader in a heroine who is a victim to adipose tissue. Also he sees that if the lady had remained thin there would have been no story worth relating, and frankly admits that the question of worth hangs in the balance, and must be measured at the end of the tale. As the end approaches he becomes even less sanguine. "Ninety-five people out of any ordinary hundred would scoff at the story and meet it with utter disbelief." Quite so—except that a hundred would

be nearer the mark than ninety-five. By her manner of living poor Mrs. Bethune had "asked for" flesh, and been given several superfluous stones of it. But, though she had got it, she was far from happy. For in order to find favour in the eyes of an inconsiderate husband, who suddenly wired to say that he was on his way home from India two years before he was due, she felt that she must get rid of her burden as quickly as possible. So she consulted a medium, sat in the dark for a few hours, and, hey presto, her "adipose tissue" fell from her like a garment. Unfortunately however, as it fell, it took the living form of a slim girl of eighteen, the image both in body and mind of what she had been at the time of her marriage; and when Colonel Bethune arrived he found two Mrs. Bethunes awaiting him. That is perhaps enough to show that Messrs. BROWN, LANGHAM have published one of the silliest books of the century.



"EXCUSE ME, BUT ARE YOU THE EARLY BIRD ONE HEARS SUCH A LOT OF TALK ABOUT?"